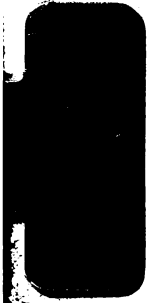

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A FRAGMENT

ON THE

**IRISH ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH.**

BY THE LATE

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

K

SEVENTH EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following unrevised fragment, found among the papers of the late Rev. Sydney Smith, if it serve no other purpose, will at least prove that his *last*, as well as his earliest efforts, were exerted for the promotion of religious freedom, and may satisfy those who have objected to his later writings, because his own interest appeared to be bound up with his opinions, that he did not hesitate to the last moment of his life, boldly to advocate what he considered to be justice to others.

April, 1845.

*Private Memoranda of Subjects intended to have been
introduced in the Pamphlet, &c.*

Debates in the House of Commons in 1825, on the motion of Lord F. Egerton, for the support of the Roman Catholic clergy. Printed separately, I believe, in Ireland. Evidence before the House of Commons in 1824 and 1825, including Doyle's.

A Speech of Charles Grant's in 1819, on a motion of James Daly to enforce the Insurrection Act.

Debates on Maynooth, in February last (1844).

Hard case of the priest's first year.

Provision offered by Pitt and Castlereagh, and accepted by the hierarchy.

*Send ambassadors to Constantinople, and refuse to send them to Rome.

England should cast off its connexion with the Irish Church. Lord F. Egerton's plan for paying the Roman Catholic clergy in 1825. The prelates agreed to take the money.

*Old mode of governing by Protestants at an end.

*Vast improvements since the Union, and fully specified in Martin, page 35.

*Priests dare not thwart the people for fear of losing money.

*Dreadful oppression of the people.

*Bishops dare not enforce their rules. They must have money.

* These subjects are treated of in the Fragment.

A FRAGMENT
ON
THE IRISH ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH.

THE revenue of the Irish Roman Catholic Church is made up of half-pence, potatoes, rags, bones, and fragments of old clothes, and those Irish old clothes. They worship often in hovels, or in the open air, from the *want* of any place of worship. Their religion is the religion of three-fourths of the population! Not far off, in a well-windowed and well-roofed house, is a well-paid Protestant clergyman, preaching to stools and hassocks, and crying in the wilderness; near him the clerk, near him the sexton, near him the sexton's wife — furious against the errors of Popery, and willing to lay down their lives for the great truths established at the Diet of Augsburg.

There is a story in the Leinster family which passes under the name of

“She is not well.”

A Protestant clergyman, whose church was in the neighbourhood, was a guest at the house of

that upright and excellent man the Duke of Leinster. He had been staying there three or four days; and on Saturday night, as they were all retiring to their rooms, the Duke said, "We shall meet to-morrow at breakfast." — "Not so (said our Milesian Protestant); your hour, my lord, is a little too late for me; I am very particular in the discharge of my duty, and your breakfast will interfere with my church." The Duke was pleased with the very proper excuses of his guest, and they separated for the night; — his Grace perhaps deeming his palace more safe from all the evils of life for containing in its bosom such an exemplary son of the Church. The first person, however, whom the Duke saw in the morning upon entering the breakfast-room was our punctual Protestant, deep in rolls and butter, his finger in an egg, and a large slice of the best Tipperary ham secured on his plate. "Delighted to see you, my dear vicar," said the Duke; "but I must say as much surprised as delighted." — "Oh, don't you know what has happened?" said the sacred breakfaster, — "*she is not well.*" — "Who is not well?" said the Duke: "you are not married — you have no sister living — I'm quite uneasy; tell me who is not well." "Why the fact is, my lord Duke, that my congregation consists of the clerk, the sexton, and the sexton's wife. Now the sexton's wife is in very delicate health: when she cannot attend,

we cannot muster the number mentioned in the rubric; and we have, therefore, no service on that day. The good woman had a cold and sore throat this morning, and, as I had breakfasted but slightly, I thought I might as well hurry back to the regular family *dejeuner*." I don't know that the clergyman behaved improperly; but such a church is hardly worth an insurrection and civil war every ten years.

Sir Robert did well in fighting it out with O'Connell. He was too late; but when he began he did it boldly and sensibly, and I, for one, am heartily glad O'Connell has been found guilty and imprisoned. He was either in earnest about Repeal or he was not. If he *was* in earnest, I entirely agree with Lord Grey and Lord Spencer, that civil war is preferable to Repeal. Much as I hate wounds, dangers, privations, and explosions — much as I love regular hours of dinner — foolish as I think men covered with the feathers of the male *Pullus domesticus*, and covered with lace in the course of the ischiatic nerve — much as I detest all these follies and ferocities, I would rather turn soldier myself than acquiesce quietly in such a separation of the Empire.

It is *such* a piece of nonsense, that no man can have any reverence for himself who would stop to discuss such a question. It is such a piece of anti-British villany, that none but the bitterest enemy of our blood and people could entertain

such a project! It is to be met only with round and grape — to be answered by Shrapnel and Congreve; to be discussed in hollow squares, and refuted by battalions four deep; to be put down by the *ultima ratio* of that armed Aristotle the Duke of Wellington.

O'Connell is released; and released I have no doubt by the conscientious decision of the Law Lords. If he was unjustly (even from some technical defect) imprisoned, I rejoice in his liberation. England is, I believe, the *only* country in the world, where such an event *could* have happened, and a wise Irishman (if there be a wise Irishman) should be slow in separating from a country whose spirit can produce, and whose institutions can admit, of such a result. Of his guilt no one doubts, but guilty men must be hung technically and according to established rules; upon a statutable gibbet, with parliament rope, and a legal hangman, sheriff, and chaplain on the scaffold, and the mob in the foreground.

But, after all, I have no desire my dear Daniel should come to any harm, for I believe there is a great deal of virtue and excellent meaning in him, and I must now beg a few minutes conversation with him. "After all, my dear Daniel, what is it you want? — a separation of the two countries? — for what purpose? — for your own aggrandisement? — for the gratification of your

personal vanity ? You don't know yourself ; you are much too honourable and moral a man, and too clear-sighted a person for such a business as this : the empire will be twisted out of your hands by a set of cut-throat villains, and you will die secretly by a poisoned potato, or be pistoled in the streets. You have too much sense and taste and openness to endure for a session the stupid and audacious wickedness and nonsense of your associates. If you want fame, you must be insatiable ! Who is so much known in all Europe, or so much admired by honest men for the *real* good you had done to your country, before this insane cry of Repeal ? And don't imagine you can intimidate this Government ; whatever be their faults or merits, you may take my word for it, you will *not* intimidate them. They will prosecute you again, and put down your Clontarf meetings, and they will be quite right in doing so. They may make concessions, and I think they will ; but they would fall into utter contempt if they allowed themselves to be terrified into a dissolution of the Union. They know full well that the English nation are unanimous and resolute upon this point, and that they would prefer war to a Repeal. And now, dear Daniel, sit down quietly at Derrynane, and tell me, when the bodily frame is refreshed with the wine of Bordeaux, whether all this is worth

while. What is the object of all government ? The object of all government is roast mutton, potatoes, claret, a stout constable, an honest justice, a clear highway, a free chapel. What trash to be bawling in the streets about the Green Isle, the Isle of the Ocean! the bold anthem of *Erin go bragh!* A far better anthem would be Erin go bread and cheese, Erin go cabins that will keep out the rain, Erin go pantaloons without holes in them ! What folly to be making eternal declamations about governing yourselves ! If laws are good and well administered, is it worth while to rush into war and rebellion in order that no better laws may be made in another place ? Are you an Eton boy who has just come out, full of Plutarch's Lives, and considering in every case how Epaminondas or Philopœmen would have acted, or are you our own dear Daniel, drilled in all the business and bustle of life ? I am with you heart and soul in my detestation of all injustice done to Ireland. Your priests shall be fed and paid, the liberties of your Church be scrupulously guarded, and in civil affairs the most even justice be preserved between Catholic and Protestant. Thus far I am a thorough rebel as well as yourself ; but when you come to the perilous nonsense of *Repeal*, in common with every honest man who has five grains of common sense, I take my leave."

It is entertaining enough, that although the Irish are beginning to be so clamorous about making their own laws, the wisest and the best statutes in the books have been made since their union with England. All Catholic disabilities have been abolished; a good police has been established all over the kingdom; public courts of petty sessions have been instituted; free trade between Great Britain and Ireland has been completely carried into effect; lord lieutenants are placed in every county; church rates are taken off Catholic shoulders; the County Grand Jury Rooms are flung open to the public; county surveyors are of great service; a noble provision is made for educating the people. I never saw a man who had returned to Ireland after four or five years' absence, who did not say how much it had improved, and how fast it was improving: and this is the country which is to be Erin-go-bragh'd by this shallow, vain, and irritable people into bloodshed and rebellion!

The first thing to be done is to pay the priests, and after a little time they will take the money. One man wants to repair his cottage; another wants a buggy; a third cannot shut his eyes to the dilapidations of a cassock. The draft is payable at sight in Dublin, or by agents in the next market town dependent upon the Commission in Dublin. The housekeeper of the holy man is importunate for money, and if it is not procured

by drawing for the salary, it must be extorted by curses and comminations from the ragged worshippers, slowly, sorrowfully, and sadly. There will be some opposition at first, but the facility of getting the salary without the violence they are now forced to use, and the difficulties to which they are exposed in procuring the payment of those emoluments to which they are fairly entitled, will, in the end, overcome all obstacles. And if it does not succeed, what harm is done by the attempt? It evinces on the part of this country the strongest disposition to do what is just, and to apply the best remedy to the greatest evil; but the very attempt would do good, and would be felt in the great Catholic insurrection, come when it will. All rebellions and disaffections are general and terrible in proportion as one party has suffered, and the other inflicted;—any great measure of conciliation, proposed in the spirit of kindness, is remembered, and renders war less terrible, and opens avenues to peace.

The Roman Catholic priest could not refuse to draw his salary from the State without incurring the indignation of his flock. “Why are you to come upon us for all this money, when you can ride over to Sligo or Belfast, and draw a draft upon Government for the amount?” It is not easy to give a satisfactory answer to this, to a shrewd man who is starving to death.

Of course, in talking of a government payment to the Catholic priest, I mean it should be done with the utmost fairness and good faith; no attempt to gain patronage, or to make use of the Pope as a stalking-horse for playing tricks. Leave the patronage exactly as you find it; and take the greatest possible care that the Catholic clergy have no reason to suspect you in this particular; do it like gentlemen, without shuffling and prevarication, or leave it alone altogether.

The most important step in improvement which mankind ever made was the secession from the see of Rome, and the establishment of the Protestant religion; but though I have the sincerest admiration of the Protestant faith, I have no admiration of Protestant hassocks on which there are no knees, nor of seats on which there is no superincumbent Protestant pressure, nor of whole acres of tenantless Protestant pews, in which no human being of the 500 sects of Christians is ever seen. I have no passion for sacred emptiness, or pious vacuity. The emoluments of those livings in which there are few or no Protestants ought, after the death of the present incumbents, to be appropriated in part to the uses of the predominant religion, or some arrangements made for superseding such utterly useless ministers immediately, securing to them the emoluments they possess.

Can any honest man say, that in parishes (as

is the case frequently in Ireland) containing 3000 or 4000 Catholics and 40 or 50 Protestants, there is the smallest chance of the majority being converted? Are not the Catholics (except in the North of Ireland, where the great mass are Presbyterians) gaining every where on the Protestants? The tithes were originally possessed by the Catholic Church of Ireland. Not one shilling of them is now devoted to that purpose. An immense majority of the common people are Catholics; they see a church richly supported by the spoils of their own church establishments, in whose tenets not one tenth part of the people believe. Is it possible to believe this can endure? — that a light, irritable, priest-ridden people will not, under such circumstances, always remain at the very eve of rebellion, always ready to explode when the finger of Daniel touches the hair trigger? — for Daniel, be it said, though he hates shedding blood in small quantities, has no objection to provoking kindred nations to war. He very properly objects to killing or being killed by Lord Alvanley; but would urge on ten thousand Pats in civil combat against ten thousand Bulls. His objections are to small homicides; and his vow that he has registered in Heaven is only against retail destruction and murder by piecemeal. He does not like to teaze Satan by driblets; but to earn eternal torments by persuading eight million Irish and twelve million

Britons no longer to buy and sell oats and salt meat, but to butcher each other in God's name to extermination. And what if Daniel dies, — of what use his death? Does Daniel make the occasion, or does the occasion make Daniel? — Daniels are made by the bigotry and insolence of England to Ireland; and till the monstrous abuses of the Protestant Church in that country are rectified, there will always *be* Daniels, and they will always come out of their dens more powerful and more popular than when you cast them in.

I do not mean by this unjustly and cowardly to run down O'Connell. He has been of eminent service to his country in the question of Catholic Emancipation, and I am by no means satisfied that with the gratification of vanity there are not mingled genuine feelings of patriotism and a deep sense of the injustice done to his country. His first success, however, flung him off his guard; and perhaps he trusted too much in the timidity of the present Government, who are by no means composed of irresolute or weak men.

If I thought Ireland quite safe, I should still object to injustice. I could never endure in silence that the Catholic Church of Ireland should be left in its present state; but I am afraid France and England can now afford to fight: and having saved a little money, they will, of course, spend it in fighting. That puppy of the waves, young

Joinville, will steam over in a high-pressure fleet! — and then comes an immense twenty per cent. income-tax war, an universal insurrection in Ireland, and a crisis of misery and distress, in which life will hardly be worth having. The struggle *may* end in our favour, but it may *not*; and the object of political wisdom is to avoid these struggles. I want to see jolly Roman Catholic priests secure of their income without any motive for sedition or turbulence. I want to see Patricks at the loom; cotton and silk factories springing up in the bogs; Ireland a rich, happy, quiet country! — scribbling, carding, cleaning, and making calico, as if mankind had only a few days more allotted to them for making clothes, and were ever after to remain stark naked.

Remember that between your impending and your past wars with Ireland, there is this remarkable difference. You have given up your Protestant auxiliaries; the Protestants enjoyed in former disputes all the patronage of Ireland; they fought not only from religious hatred, but to preserve their monopoly;—that monopoly is gone; you have been candid and just for thirty years, and have lost those friends whose swords were always ready to defend the partiality of the Government and to stifle the cry of justice. The next war will not be between Catholic and Protestant, but between Ireland and England.

I have some belief in Sir Robert. He is a man

of great understanding, and *must* see that this eternal O'Connelling will never do, that it is impossible it can last. We are in a transition state, and the Tories may be assured that the Baronet will not go too fast. If Peel tells them that the thing must be done, they may be sure it is high time to do it;—they may retreat mournfully and sullenly before common justice and common sense, but retreat they *must* when Tamworth gives the word, — and in quick-step too, and without loss of time.

And let me beg of my dear Ultras not to imagine that they survive for a single instant without Sir Robert—that they could form an Ultra-tory Administration. Is there a Chartist in Great Britain who would not, upon the first intimation of such an attempt, order a new suit of clothes, and call upon the baker and milkman for an extended credit? Is there a political reasoner who would not come out of his hole with a new constitution? Is there one ravenous rogue who would not be looking for his prey? Is there one honest man of common sense who does not see that universal disaffection and civil war would follow from the blind fury, the childish prejudices and the deep ignorance of such a sect? I have a high opinion of Sir Robert Peel, but he must summon up all his political courage, and do something next session for the payment of the Roman Catholic priests. He must run some risk of shocking public opinion;

no greater risk, however, than he did in Catholic Emancipation. I am sure the Whigs would be true to him, and I think I observe that very many obtuse country gentlemen are alarmed by the state of Ireland and the hostility of France and America.

Give what you please to the Catholic priests, habits are not broken in a day. There must be time as well as justice, but in the end these things have their effect. A buggy, a house, some fields near it, a decent income paid quarterly; in the long run these are the cures of sedition and disaffection; men don't quit the common business of life and join bitter political parties unless they have something justly to complain of.

But where is the money—about 400,000*l.* per annum — to come from? Out of the pockets of that best of men Mr. Thomas Grenville, out of the pockets of the Bishops, of Sir Robert Inglis, and all other men who pay all other taxes; and never will public money be so well and wisely employed!

It turns out that there is no law to prevent entering into diplomatic engagements with the Pope. The sooner we become acquainted with a gentleman who has so much to say to eight millions of our subjects the better! Can anything be so childish and absurd as a horror of communicating with the Pope, and all the hobgoblins we have imagined of premunires and outlawries for this contraband trade in piety? Our an-

cestors (strange to say wiser than ourselves) have left us to do as we please, and the sooner Government do, what they *can* do legally, the better. A thousand opportunities of doing good in Irish affairs have been lost, from our having no avowed and dignified agent at the Court of Rome. If it depended upon me, I would send the Duke of Devonshire there to-morrow, with nine chaplains and several tons of Protestant theology. I have no love of popery, but the Pope is at all events better than the idol of Juggernaut, whose chaplains I believe we pay, and whose chariot I dare say is made in Long Acre. We pay 10,000*l.* a year to our ambassador at Constantinople, and are startled with the idea of communicating diplomatically with Rome, deeming the Sultan a better Christian than the Pope!

The mode of exacting clerical dues in Ireland is quite arbitrary and capricious. Uniformity is out of the question; every thing depends on the disposition and temper of the clergyman. There are salutary regulations put forth in each diocese respecting church dues and church discipline, and put forth by episcopal and synodical authority. Specific sums are laid down for mass, marriage, and the administration of the Eucharist. These authorised payments are moderate enough, but every priest, in spite of these rules, makes the most he can of his ministry, and the strangest discrepancy prevails, even in

the same diocese, in the demands made upon the people. The priest and his flock are continually coming into collision on pecuniary matters. Twice a year the holy man collects confession money under the denomination of Christmas and Easter offerings. He selects in every neighbourhood one or two houses in which he holds stations of confession. Very disagreeable scenes take place when additional money is demanded, or when additional time for payment is craved. The first thing done when there is a question of marrying a couple is, to make a *bargain* about the marriage money. The wary minister watches the palpitations, puts on a shilling for every sigh, and two-pence on every tear, and maddens the impetuosity of the young lovers up to a pound sterling. The remuneration prescribed by the diocesan statutes, is never thought of for a moment; the priest makes as hard a bargain as he can, and the bed the poor peasants are to lie upon is sold, to make their concubinage lawful;—but every one present at the marriage is to contribute;—the minister, after begging and intreating some time to little purpose, gets into a violent rage, abuses and is abused;—and in this way is celebrated one of the sacraments of the Catholic Church!—The same scenes of altercation and abuse take place when gossip money is refused at baptisms; but the most painful scenes take place at extreme unction, a ceremony to

which the common people in Ireland attach the utmost importance. "Pay me beforehand—this is not enough—I insist upon more, I know you can afford it, I insist upon a larger fee!"—and all this before the dying man, who feels he has not an hour to live! and believes that salvation depends upon the timely application of this sacred grease.

Other bad consequences arise out of the present system of Irish Church support. Many of the clergy are constantly endeavouring to overreach and undermine one another. Every man looks to his own private emolument, regardless of all covenants, expressed or implied. The curate does not make a fair return to the parish priest, nor the parish priest to the curate. There is an universal scramble!—every one gets what he can, and seems to think he would be almost justified in appropriating the whole to himself. And how can all this be otherwise? How are the poor wretched clergy to live but by setting a high price on their theological labours, and using every incentive of fear and superstition to extort from six millions of beggars the little payments wanted for the bodies of the poor, and the support of life! I maintain that it is shocking and wicked to leave the religious guides of six millions of people in such a state of destitution!—to bestow no more thought upon them than upon the clergy of the Sandwich Islands! If I

were a member of the Cabinet, and met my colleagues once a week, to eat birds and beasts, and to talk over the state of the world, I should begin upon Ireland before the soup was finished, go on through fish, turkey, and saddle of mutton, and never end till the last thimbleful of claret had passed down the throat of the incredulous Haddington: but there they sit, week after week; there they come, week after week; the Piccadilly Mars, the Scotch Neptune, Themis Lyndhurst, the Tamworth Baronet, dear Goody, and dearer Gladdy, and think no more of paying the Catholic clergy, than a man of real fashion does of paying his tailor! And there is no excuse for this in fanaticism. There is only one man in the Cabinet who objects from reasons purely fanatical, because the Pope is the Scarlet Lady, or the Seventh Vial, or the Little Horn. All the rest are entirely of opinion that it *ought* to be done — that it is the one thing needful; but they are afraid of bishops, and county meetings, newspapers, and pamphlets, and reviews; all fair enough objects of apprehension, but they must be met, and encountered, and put down. It is impossible that the subject can be much longer avoided, and that every year is to produce a deadly struggle with the people, and a long trial in time of peace with O' somebody, the patriot for the time being, or the general, perhaps, in time of a foreign war.

If I were a Bishop, living beautifully in a state of serene plenitude, I don't think I could endure the thought of so many honest, pious, and laborious clergymen of another faith, placed in such disgraceful circumstances! I could not get into my carriage with jelly-springs, or see my two courses every day, without remembering the buggy and the bacon of some poor old Catholic Bishop, ten times as laborious, and with much more, perhaps, of theological learning than myself, often distressed for a few pounds! and burthened with duties utterly disproportioned to his age and strength. I think, if the extreme comfort of my own condition did not extinguish all feeling for others, I should sharply commiserate such a Church, and attempt with ardour and perseverance to apply the proper remedy. Now let us bring names and well-known scenes before the English reader, to give him a clearer notion of what passes in Catholic Ireland. The living of St. George's, Hanover Square, is a benefice of about 1500*l.* per annum, and a good house. It is in the possession of Dr. Hodgson, who is also Dean of Carlisle, worth, I believe, about 1500*l.* more. A more comfortable existence can hardly be conceived. Dr. Hodgson is a very worthy, amiable man, and I am very glad he is as rich as he is: but suppose he had no revenues but what he got off his own bat,—suppose that instead of tumbling through the skylight, as his

income now does, it was procured by Catholic methods. The Doctor tells Mr. Thompson he will not marry him to Miss Simpson under 30*l.*; Thompson demurs, and endeavours to beat him down. The Doctor sees Miss Simpson; finds her very pretty; thinks Thompson hasty, and after a long and undignified negotiation, the Doctor gets his fee. Soon after this he receives a message from Place, the tailor, to come and anoint him with extreme unction. He repairs to the bed-side, and tells Mr. Place that he will not touch him under a suit of clothes, equal to 10*l.*: the family resist, the altercation goes on before the perishing artizan, the price is reduced to 8*l.*, and Mr. Place is oiled. On the ensuing Sunday the child of Lord B. is to be christened: the godfathers and godmothers will only give a sovereign each; the Doctor refuses to do it for the money, and the church is a scene of clamour and confusion. These are the scenes which, under similar circumstances, *would* take place here, for the congregation want the comforts of religion without fees, and will cheat the clergyman if they can; and the clergyman who means to live, must meet all these artifices with stern resistance. And this is the wretched state of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy!—a miserable blot and stain on the English nation! What a blessing to this country would a real Bishop be! A man who thought it the first duty of Christianity

to allay the bad passions of mankind, and to reconcile contending sects with each other. What peace and happiness such a man as the Bishop of London might have conferred on the Empire, if, instead of changing black dresses for white dresses, and administering to the frivolous disputes of foolish zealots, he had laboured to abate the hatred of Protestants for the Roman Catholics, and had dedicated his powerful understanding to promote religious peace in the two countries. Scarcely any bishop is sufficiently a man of the world to deal with fanatics. The way is not to reason with them, but to ask them to dinner. They are armed against logic and remonstrance, but they are puzzled in a labyrinth of wiles, disarmed by facilities and concessions, introduced to a new world, come away thinking more of hot and cold, and dry and sweet, than of Newman, Keble, and Pusey. So mouldered away Hannibal's army at Capua! So the primitive and perpendicular prig of Puseyism is softened into practical wisdom, and coaxed into common sense! Providence gives us Generals, and Admirals, and Chancellors of the Exchequer; but I never remember in my time a real Bishop, — a grave elderly man, full of Greek, with sound views of the middle voice and preterperfect tense, gentle and kind to his poor clergy, of powerful and commanding eloquence; in Parliament never to be put down when the great interests of man-

kind were concerned ; leaning to the Government when *it* was right, leaning to the People when *they* were right ; feeling that if the Spirit of God had called him to that high office, he was called for no mean purpose, but rather that, seeing clearly, and acting boldly, and intending purely, he might confer lasting benefits upon mankind.

We consider the Irish clergy as factious, and as encouraging the bad anti-British spirit of the people. How can it be otherwise ? They live by the people ; they have nothing to live upon but the voluntary oblations of the people ; and they must fall into the same spirit as the people, or they would be starved to death. No marriage ; no mortuary masses ; no unctions to the priest who preached against O'Connell !

Give the clergy a maintenance separate from the will of the people, and you will then enable them to oppose the folly and madness of the people. The objection to the State provision does not really come from the clergy, but from the agitators and repealers : these men see the immense advantage of carrying the clergy with them in their agitation, and of giving the sanction of religion to political hatred ; they know that the clergy, moving in the same direction with the people, have an immense influence over them ; and they are very wisely afraid, not only of losing this co-operating power, but of seeing

it, by a state provision, arrayed against them. I am fully convinced that a state payment to the Catholic clergy, by leaving to that laborious and useful body of men the exercise of their free judgment, would be the severest blow that Irish agitation could receive.

For advancing these opinions, I have no doubt I shall be assailed by Sacerdos, Vindex, Latimer, Vates, Clericus, Aruspex, and be called atheist, deist, democrat, smuggler, poacher, highwayman Unitarian, and Edinburgh reviewer! Still, *I am in the right*,—and what I say, requires excuse for being trite and obvious, not for being mischievous and paradoxical. I write for three reasons; first, because I really wish to do good; secondly, because if I don't write, I know nobody else will; and thirdly, because it is the nature of the animal to write, and I cannot help it. Still, in looking back I see no reason to repent. What I have said *ought* to be done, generally *has* been done, but always twenty or thirty years too late; done, not of course because I have said it, but because it was no longer *possible* to avoid doing it. Human beings cling to their delicious tyrannies, and to their exquisite nonsense, like a drunkard to his bottle, and go on till death stares them in the face. The monstrous state of the Catholic church in Ireland will probably remain till some monstrous ruin

threatens the very existence of the Empire, and Lambeth and Fulham are cursed by the affrighted people:

I have always compared the Protestant church in Ireland (and I believe my friend Thomas Moore stole the simile from me) to the institution of butchers' shops in all the villages of our Indian empire. "We *will* have a butcher's shop in every village, and you, Hindoos, shall pay for it. We know that many of you do not eat meat at all, and that the sight of beef steaks is particularly offensive to you; but still, a stray European may pass through your village, and want a steak or a chop: the shop *shall* be established; and you shall pay for it." This is English legislation for Ireland!! There is no abuse like it in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have heard of Timbuctoo! It is an error that requires 20,000 armed men for its protection in time of peace; which costs more than a million a year; and which, in the first French war, in spite of the puffing and panting of fighting steamers, will and *must* break out into desperate rebellion.

It is commonly said, if the Roman Catholic priests are paid by the State, they will lose their influence over their flocks; — not their *fair* influence — not that influence which any wise and

good man would wish to see in all religions — not the dependence of humble ignorance upon prudence and piety — only fellowship in faction, and fraternity in rebellion; — all *that will* be lost. A peep-of-day clergyman will no longer preach to a peep-of-day congregation — a White-boy vicar will no longer lead the psalm to White-boy vocalists; but every thing that is good and wholesome will remain. This, however, is not what the anti-British faction want; they want all the animation which piety can breathe into sedition, and all the fury which the priesthood can preach to diversity of faith: and *this* is what they mean by a clergy losing their influence over the people! The less a clergyman exacts of his people, the more his payments are kept out of sight, the less will be the friction with which he exercises the functions of his office. A poor Catholic may respect a priest the more who marries, baptizes, and anoints; but he respects him because he associates with his name and character the performance of sacred duties, not because he exacts heavy fees for doing so. Double fees would be a very doubtful cure for scepticism; and though we have often seen the tenth of the earth's produce carted away for the benefit of the clergyman, we do not remember any very lively marks of satisfaction and delight which it produced in the countenance of the decimated

person. I am thoroughly convinced that State payments to the Catholic clergy would remove a thousand causes of hatred between the priest and his flock, and would be as favourable to the increase of his useful authority, as it would be fatal to his factious influence over the people.

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